

MOTIF "MOVING SWASTIKA"
(origin and symbolism of the ancient motive)

A lot has been said about the cross as a symbol of the sun before the advent of Christianity. And a lot has been said about the ancient sign of the "swastika", derived from the sun cross. It will be appropriate to mention that the most ancient swastika dates from the late Paleolithic and was found in Ukraine, near the village of Mezino (Mezino archaeological culture). Mezino swastika, carved on a bracelet from a mammoth bone of 12,000 years, and she unequivocally confirmed the origin of the swastika from a meander motif. (10. 267, fig. 103.7-8.)

But there is another ancient symbolic motif, which originated from the same meander and swastika. This is the motive of the "Moving swastika". Unlike the sun rotating around its axis (a single swastika), this motif is a rhythmically repetitive swastika, sequentially connected to each other in an -shaped structure. The structure of this motive develops linearly, which predetermined the function of a border in the designs of ancient art. But before becoming a decorative border, this motif served as a sacral guardian (talisman) on household items and jewelry.

Single images of the swastika appear among the ancestors of modern Azerbaijanis in the Middle Bronze Age (XX-XIV centuries BC.). [1.307]. At the end of the Bronze Age, sun worship becomes ubiquitous. The sun symbols in the form of a swastika are spread in ceramics, bronze ornaments, pendants and amulets. [2.Table X].

In the epoch of late bronze and early iron (XIV-IX centuries BC), images of repeated, series-connected symbols of the swastika first appear on the burial ceramics [4.99. Table III, pict.26,27]. At about this time, swastika images appear in Gobustan petroglyphs. [3. 49].

A huge number of images of the swastika found in the graves of the era of iron. At this time, the tradition to leave a special clay seal (terracotta) with a relief image of the swastika (pintadera seal) next to the buried is spreading. These seals

were used by the departed during life and should have been used by them after the “resurrection” in the new life. With the help of these seals, a swastika imprint was made on the body, when performing the rite of sun worship and as a protective symbol. Henna's vegetable dye served as a stamp paint [5.75]. Such printed images of the swastika on the body, as a tattoo - performed a protective function from evil spirits.

The wide spread of totemistic cults in the era of iron - leads to the "unification" of the sun symbol - the swastika with the image of a lion. The image of the swastika on the figure of a lion or, next to it - indicates a new symbolism. On the bronze belt from Kedabek, we find rapport repetition of the lion's drawings with the swastika [5.55]. With the closure of the bronze belt at the waist, repeated lions with swastikas form an endless circle. Thus, the eternal movement of the solar deity in a circle is symbolically imitated.

In the era of iron (I millennium BC), the territory of the Greater Caucasus and present-day Azerbaijan is being drawn into the orbit of the nomadic Turkic culture [6. 152-158; 7. 71-84]. The tribes of the Scythians, and later the Huns, the Khazars - become the hawkers and "mixers" of the cultural traditions of peoples and tribes who lived in the expanses from Western Asia, India to China.

It is obvious that already in the era of iron, the ancient swastika acquires a new symbolism - “The Moving Solar Deity”. The symbolic and protective image of the symbol “Moving Swastika” appears on gold, silver and bronze products of the Scythian era. Later, this motif appears in the ornaments and talismans of the Hun and Khazar periods. In the 8th century, the Khazar kingdom formed on the territory of modern Azerbaijan, which separated from the Western Turkic Khaganate [8.]. In this epoch, the symbol “Moving Swastika” becomes a border surrounding the central motif. An image of a single and moving swastika appear on fabrics and carpets.

In the early Middle Ages, the symbol of the swastika appears among the tribal marks (tamgha) of individual Turkic clans on the territory of Azerbaijan. A little later, it appears in a slightly modified form in the runic alphabet of the

Khaganate of Heavenly Turks (Geoy Turk). The swastika as a tamgha sign still symbolized the sun and its perpetual motion across the sky (Geoy).

With the spread of Islam, the ancient swastika and its symbolic value adapt to the new religion: The single, “rotating” swastika among the Sunnis began to symbolize the non-visual (aniconic) of Allah and his divine “radiance”. The Shiite swastika is composed of Kufic letters and forms the monogram of Imam Ali.

The motif of the “Moving Solar Deity” in the form of a swastika recurring and connected with each other, with the spread of Islam, also acquires a new symbolism: While preserving its pagan, “protective” context in the works of Muslim art, it has become a decorative border.

In the decoration of architectural structures, works of artistic metal, ceramics, fabrics and carpets, the motif of the “Moving Sun (swastika)” continues to retain its original function of the amulet. This symbolic motif of the rim protects the border, hidden (*batin*-الباطن) from the outer, overt (*zahir*-الظاهر), forming the border between the sacred and profane world.

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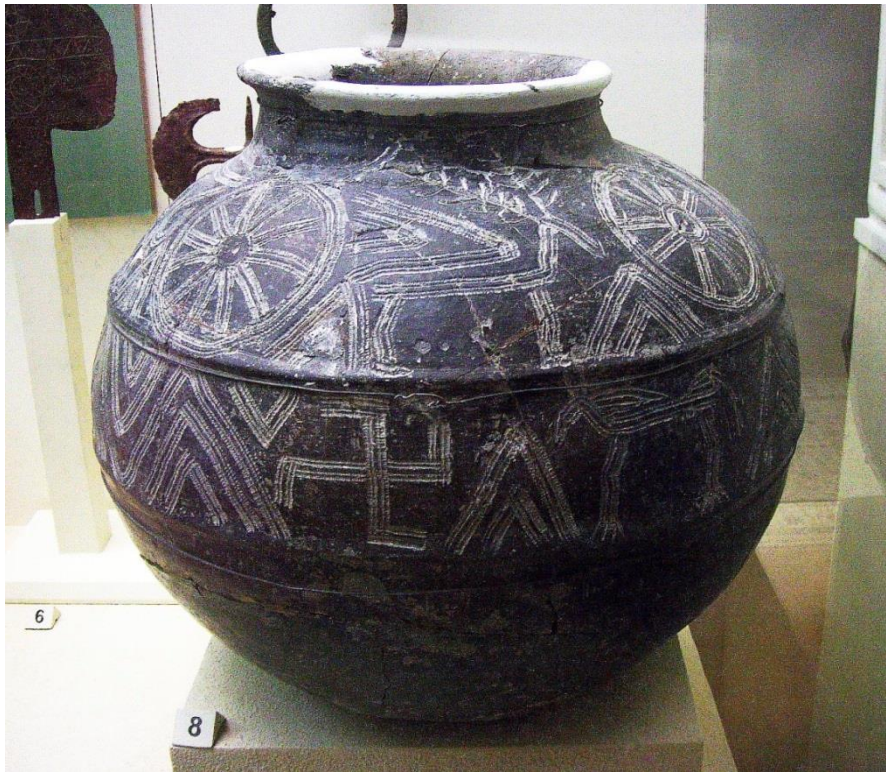
TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS



Disc-shaped suspension. Bronze. II millennium BC. Kedabek.
National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan.



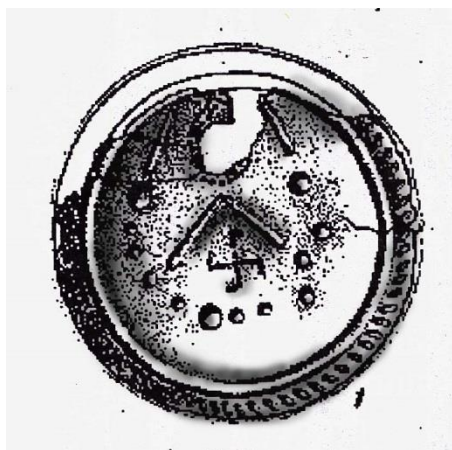
Fragment of a ceramic vessel. II millennium BC. Kultepe. Nakhichevan.
National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan.



Ceramic vessel. II millennium BC. Karachemirli. Shamkir.
National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan.



Ceramic vessel. II millennium BC. Khanlar.
National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan



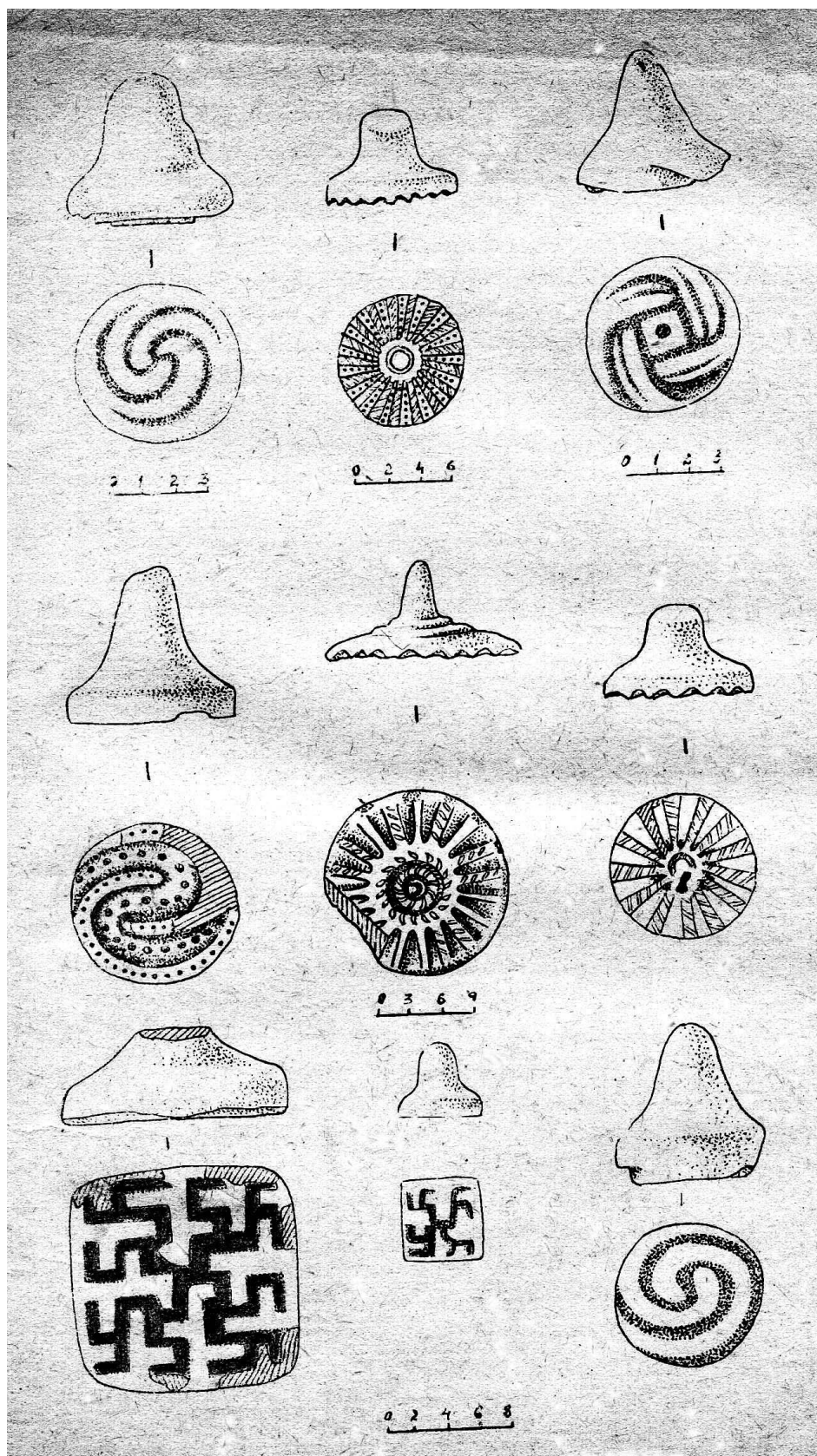
The temple medallion. Bronze. 14-11 centuries. BC. Dashkesan.
National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan



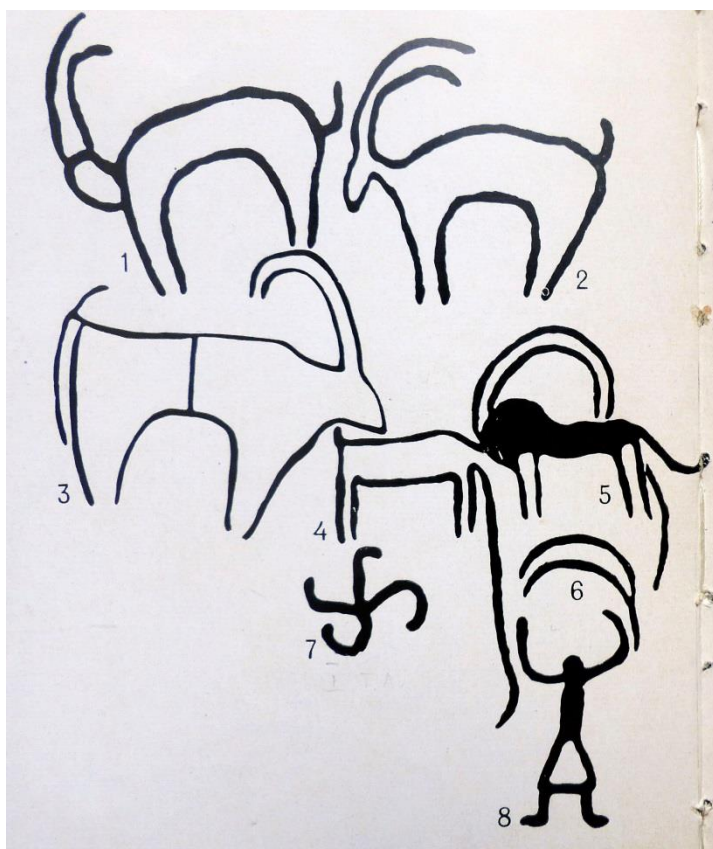
Terracotta printing (pintadera). Kazakh. Sarytepe. The end of the II millennium BC. Agstafa Local History Museum.



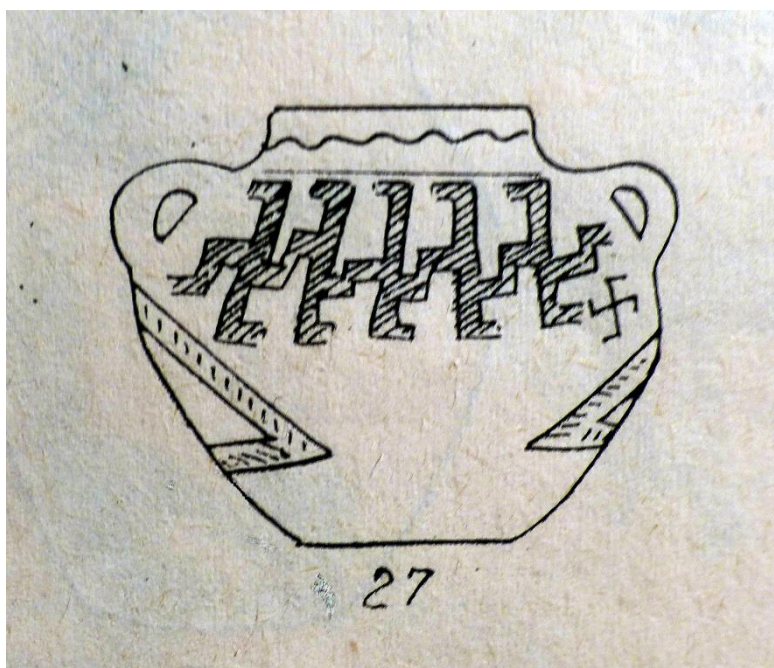
Terracotta seal (pintadera). The second half of the second millennium BC and the motive of this seal on the Azerbaijani carpet of the XIX century. Kazakh.



Terracotta prints (pintaderas). The end of II - the beginning of the I millennium BC. Kazakh. Sarytepe. National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan



Petroglyphs. I millennium BC. Gobustan. Azerbaijan



Ceramic vessel from the mound(kurgan). 11th century BC. Khanlar.
Motif "Moving Swastika"
National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan



Bronze belt. The end of the II millennium BC. Gedabek. Totemistic Motif "Moving Swastika". Museum of the History of Azerbaijan



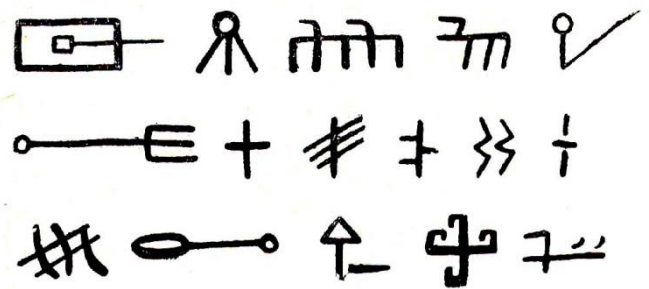
Ancient ruins of the "Temple of Mithra" of the Roman era. II c. Motif "Moving Swastika". Ancient Ephesus - Modern Seljuk. Turkey.



Fragment of a ceramic vessel. 7-5 centuries. BC.

Azerbaijan.

Mardakan Baku. National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan

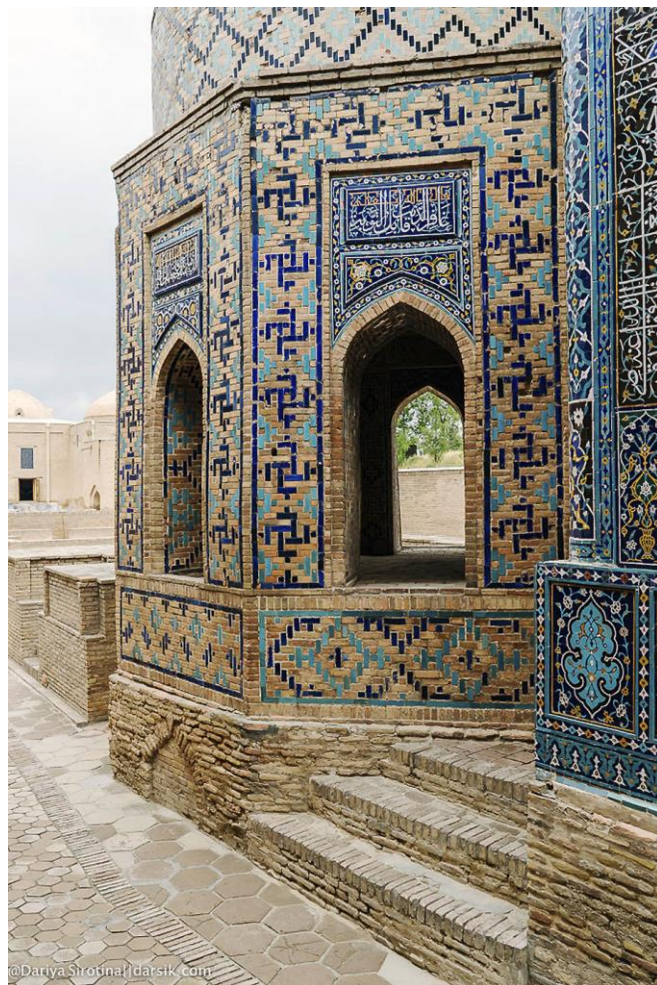


Tribe marks (Tamga) on gravestones. 8-13 centuries.

Gyrkhublag. Shemakha.



Swastika in the decoration of Muslim religious architecture. 15th century.
Samarkand. Uzbekistan



Swastika in the decoration of Muslim religious architecture. 15th century.
Samarkand. Uzbekistan



Ancient swastika on the “Damgaly” carpet. Kazakh. XIX century.
Azerbaijan Carpet Museum



Ancient swastika on the Karabakh carpet "Malybeyli". XIX century.
Azerbaijan Carpet Museum



Motif "Moving Swastika" on the carpet. XX century.
Baku. Azerbaijan. Private collection.